

RESTORED TO USEFULNESS.

(by Hueston Marshall)

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Restored to Usefulness

Joy Hueston Marshall

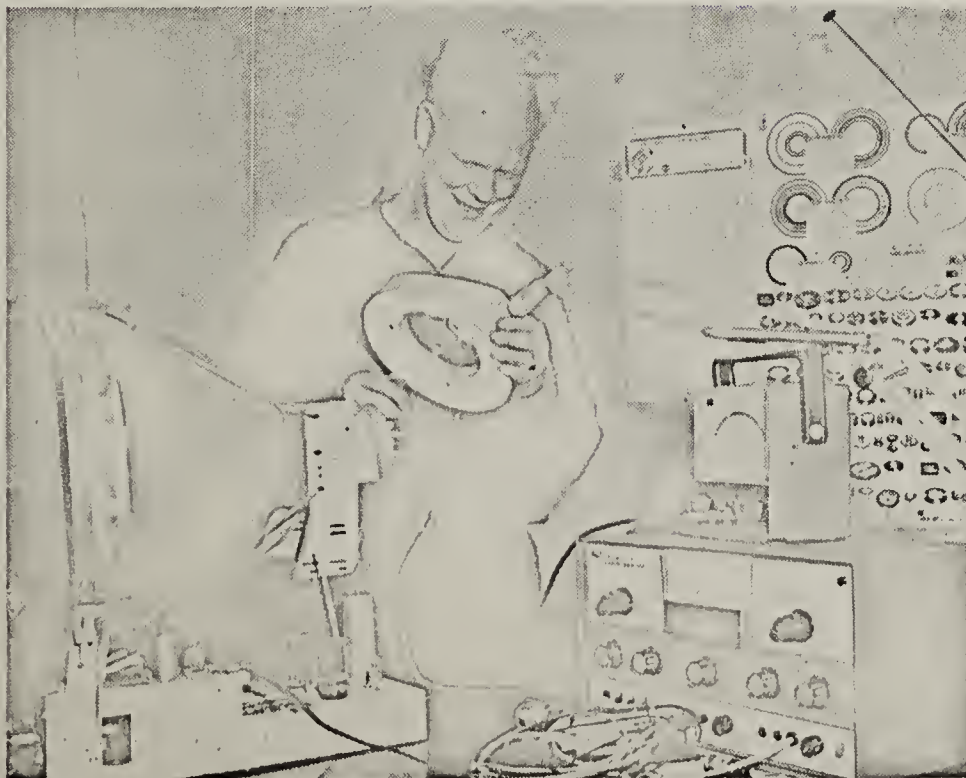
JOHN T. MILLER MUST GET within 20 feet to see what persons with normal vision can see at 400 feet. He has had this degree of blindness all of his life, and has made an excellent adjustment to his handicap. His home is in Anderson County, but he spent several years at the Tennessee School for the Blind, entering the school in 1947 and graduating in 1962.

When J. T. was asked what he liked best at the Tennessee School for the Blind, he replied, "I liked to work on radios and TV sets." He explained further that he went out for the wrestling team, but this took too much of his time and he quit to devote all his spare time to electronic work. He mentioned that his electronics instructor would let him have a key to the shop, and he would work at night. He made some spending

money doing this type of work long before he graduated.

The counselor for the blind first met J. T. in 1962, and everybody who has worked with him over the years admires him. He had an excellent attitude toward rehabilitation. He has always wanted to work, and has shown much enthusiasm and cooperation.

Under the sponsorship of Rehabilitation for the Blind, J. T. took a course in electronics in Knoxville. After this, he became interested in going into business for himself. Opportunities were scarce in his field, and he worked for a while doing auto body work and some mechanic work. He was constantly thinking of an electronics shop of his own. He never became discouraged, or if he did, never let the counselor know.



A customer's television set gets a good checkup at Mr. Miller's shop.

*Five stories about Rehabilitation for the Blind,
better than fiction because the people are real*

Last year, a building in Clinton was vacated, and Mr. Miller saw this as his opportunity. He knew that Rehabilitation for the Blind could do nothing toward renting or leasing the building for him, although the training and placement specialist visited him and made recommendations. Rehabilitation funds had already been used to purchase some tools and equipment for him. Various people were contacted by the counselor, the specialist, and other interested persons in order to try to obtain orders for repair work.

Mr. Miller leased the building for a year. He also borrowed money to buy additional equipment and supplies. He is located across the street from the new Courthouse in Clinton, and seems to be busy all the time. He repairs items such as radios, tape recorders, and television sets.

It would be impossible to list the names of all of the people who like Mr. Miller and who supported our efforts in working with him. But he and the Services for the Blind staff appreciate the cooperation of all who helped him to help himself.

—E. TYE HARBER, *Counselor*.

THE COUNSELOR AND HOME TEACHER felt at a loss when they first tried to make plans to train Mrs. Hentz for employment. She needed to work, since her husband's physical condition allowed him to work very little. However, Mrs. Hentz was, and is, deaf, mute, and blind, and she had never been employed outside the home.

Her older daughter was married and had a family of her own to care for. The younger daughter was in elementary school. Her son was in the Army in Vietnam.

How and where do you train a deaf-blind woman and for what vocational objective? How do you get her to and from a suitable

training location? How does she function and get along with other trainees? How is she likely to be accepted by a prospective employer? And first, how do you communicate with her?

All of the vision in Mrs. Hentz's right eye was gone. The little that remained in her left eye was rapidly decreasing. At first she could still see to read large print written on a white pad with a large, black grease pencil, and also was able to use sign language. However, these methods were becoming less effective as her sight deteriorated.

The home teacher was a tremendous help. Being blind, he knew sign language, and he and Mrs. Hentz could talk by printing sign language words in each other's palms with their fingers. He would then translate her thoughts to the counselor and to anyone else connected with the progress of the case.

By this same method, the home teacher taught Mrs. Hentz to read Braille. Since she could not hear him speak a letter as her fingers touched it, she had to have that letter translated through the sign language. This was a painstaking process, but she learned Braille in half the normal time.

In the meantime, the counselor was making plans for a specific training program. He talked with the personnel at A. P. Mills Industries for the Blind and arranged for work evaluation in various vocational fields to try to determine if Mrs. Hentz had the ability to use her hands as a means of production. Arrangements were made for members of her church to furnish transportation to and from the workshop.

Mrs. Hentz was present every day during the two-week evaluation period. It soon became evident that there was a reasonable expectation that Mrs. Hentz could learn a skill. The workshop counselor gladly agreed to learn how to communicate with her. It was then the responsibility of the rehabilita-

tion counselor to prepare a plan of service which would include everything necessary to help Mrs. Hentz achieve her goal of employment.

A maintenance grant from the state was arranged to cover daily expenses during the training course since Mr. Hentz was ill and unemployed. Certain Braille equipment was furnished through the home teacher. Corrective dental treatment was secured, and special counseling and guidance were given. Mrs. Hentz herself arranged for someone in her neighborhood to care for the younger daughter after school. The entire family was helped to understand what Mrs. Hentz was trying to accomplish. Practice in communicating was continued.

When training began, Mrs. Hentz was tested in a number of situations in order to see which areas she seemed best suited for and liked. She soon discovered her preference. It was sewing. She found the industrial sewing machine at the workshop stimulating, and there was a reasonable expectation that she could secure employment in this field.

Now another resource was developed. Industries for the Deaf-Blind, a national organization, learned about Mrs. Hentz. They sent a representative to see and talk with her and offer some suggestions that might further help her in securing employment. Many of these suggestions were used as a part of her training program.

Overcoming many obstacles, including family crises at home, Mrs. Hentz progressed steadily in learning how to use the various sewing machines.

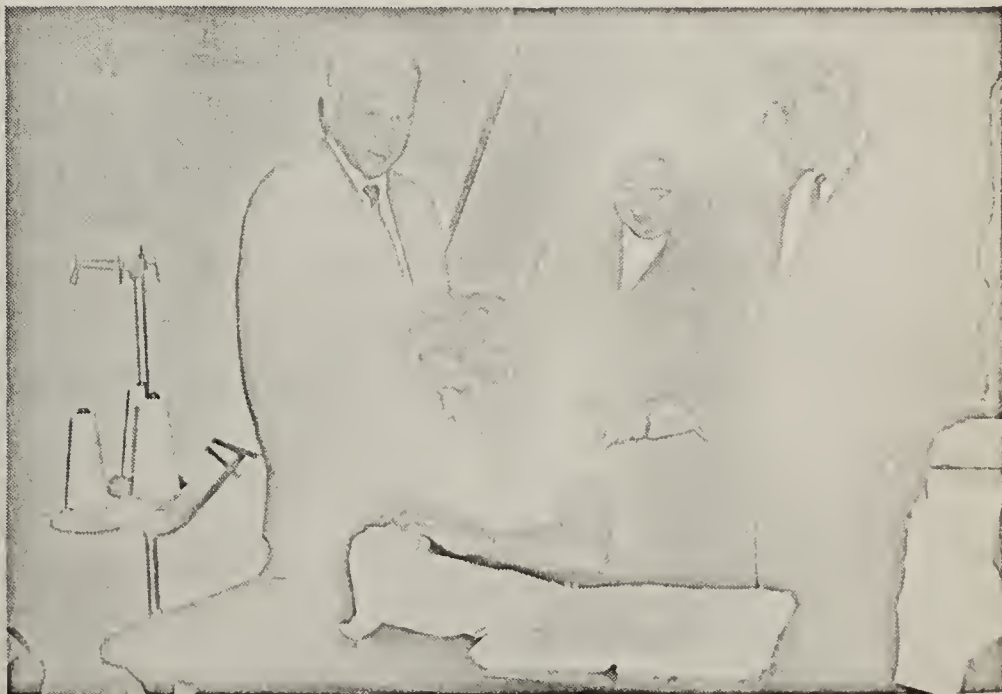
The training report at the end of the eighth month read: "We are coming to the end of our long training period for Mrs. Hentz. It is remarkable that a woman who has reached the age of forty-seven and who has never been employed has made such remarkable progress in eight months. Everyone has been very pleased with her ability, initiative, mobility and determination to perform any task required of her. This person, with two of the most severe of all disabilities, deafness as well as blindness, has made extreme efforts to learn all there is to know about her prospective job."

Regular employment at the workshop was offered Mrs. Hentz, and this pleased her very much. She had made many friends at the workshop and said that she did not wish to leave them.

On the day that Mrs. Hentz was officially employed, a little ceremony was held in the sewing department of the workshop. Many of the people who played a part in helping her achieve employment were present. Coffee was served, and photographs made.

This was several months ago. Mrs. Hentz is still employed and still doing an outstanding job in the sewing department. She makes potholders, pillowcases, apron sets, and dishcloths. Her employment is secure, and her

James Warrick, home teacher, Miss Caroline Jenkins, counselor at the A. P. Mills Industries for the Blind, and Conrad Ligon, Rehabilitation for the Blind counselor, help Mrs. Emmie Hentz celebrate her first day of employment.



rehabilitation case has been closed. Her husband received services through the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and is also holding down a job. Together they have more income than ever before. She smiles as she spells out in her sign language how different her life is now.

—CONRAD LIGON, *Counselor*

WHEN MRS. NORMA GRIMES was referred to Services for the Blind, she had been without sight for approximately a year due to diabetic retinopathy. As a result of her blindness, she was no longer able to keep house for her husband and two sons. Mrs. Grimes had moved into the home of her elderly parents, the two children were being cared for by her husband's sister, and Mr. Grimes lived elsewhere. The whole family seemed to feel that, being blind, Mrs. Grimes could do nothing. As a result, she spent her days sitting in a chair in one corner of the living room.

At the counselor's request, the home teacher began teaching Mrs. Grimes to read Braille, and she learned this readily. It gave her something to do and helped to relieve her feeling of depression and helplessness. It was evident however, that Mrs. Grimes would need personal adjustment training in order to learn to function as a blind person. She was sent to Arkansas Enterprises for the Blind and spent six months there. During this training, her attitude toward herself and others changed, and she began to participate in social and recreational activities.

As the vocational objective was that of homemaker, Mrs. Grimes concentrated on this area of training and spent much of her time learning to do the things that would be required of her when she returned to her family. Her primary aim was to be able to have her family together once again. She learned to travel independently and to read and write Braille proficiently. She now communicates with other sightless persons through this method.

After she returned from Arkansas Enter-



The Grimes boys want to know what's cooking in their mother's kitchen.

prises for the Blind, special cooking and sewing items were provided for Mrs. Grimes, and the home teacher helped her to learn to use these. Mrs. Grimes is now an efficient homemaker and, as a result of rehabilitation services, she and her family are together again. Mrs. Grimes has made a miraculous change from a person who was depressed, nervous, and almost helpless to one who is confident, well adjusted, and as self-sufficient as a blind person can be. She is now very much a part of the world around her.

—JAMES V. MOORE, *Counselor*

ON JANUARY 1 RICHARD HEARN of Chattanooga began his second year of teaching at Lee College in Cleveland, Tennessee. Mr. Hearn is totally blind and Rehabilitation for the Blind is proud to have had a part in this young man's training and placement.

After graduation from the Tennessee School for the Blind in Donelson, Mr. Hearn enrolled at the University of Chattanooga,

planning to become a music teacher. He did outstanding work scholastically for his first two years. However, as he planned to enter the upper level of training the University was undergoing a program to upgrade its teacher trainees, and there was a feeling that no handicapped person, let alone a totally blind one, would be qualified to become a teacher in the public schools. His counselor encouraged Mr. Hearn to file for admission to the teacher education program anyway, as the final decision was to be made by a committee and not any one person. He filed his application, it was approved, and he continued his studies. He did practice teaching at both the elementary and high school levels and is certified to teach in the State of Tennessee in grades 1-12.

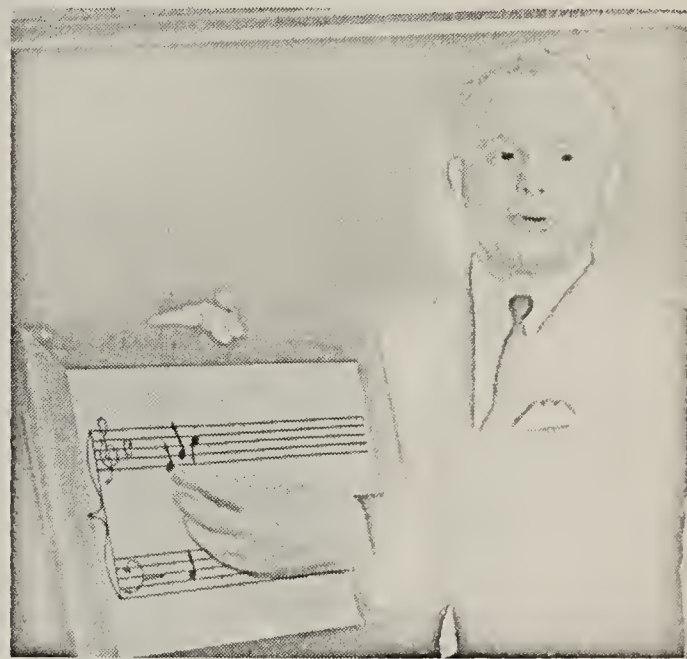
In 1964 Mr. Hearn was graduated magna cum laude with the highest average in his class of 210 students. He was elected to Alpha, an honorary scholastic society, and Blue Key, also honorary. He was a member of Lambda Chi Alpha Social Fraternity and participated in the marching band and many other musical organizations on the campus.

Because of his outstanding college record, the head of the music department of the University of Chattanooga felt that Mr. Hearn should continue his education. He thought so too. He enrolled at the University of Tennessee to work on a master's degree in music prior to undertaking a teaching career. His major was in brass instruments as he plays the tuba. His work at the University of Tennessee was quite successful, and he finished the degree work in three and one-half quarters. He gave a graduate recital and took oral examinations. Teachers and an official of the University wrote the Blind Services counselor, indicating that this young man performed in an outstanding manner in his examination and recommending that he go on to work for his doctorate. They felt he could make a contribution in the field of music.

Mr. Hearn talked over this possibility with his counselor. He felt that he had been in school long enough. He wanted to go to work. However, he found that having a master's degree did not ensure immediate employment. Staff members of both the University of Chattanooga and the Univer-

sity of Tennessee, as well as his counselor, gave him help and encouragement at this point.

After following several leads, Mr. Hearn was employed by the head of the music department of Lee College to teach brass instruments to music majors on a part-time



Mr. Hearn uses special aids in teaching music.

basis for the second semester of 1966. He was then reemployed for the school year 1966-1967 to teach music history and theory in addition to instrumental music.

Mr. Hearn has many basic qualities that were needed for him to achieve this unusual placement, but he is quick to acknowledge the help he received from the Department of Public Welfare and its Blind Services Section in the areas of counseling, guidance and financial support which made this high-skilled placement possible.

All of us who know and have worked with Richard Hearn are very proud of him.

—MILTON ALFORD, *Counselor*

FOR MOST OF HER LIFE Mrs. A. R. Fain had had trouble with her vision. When her daughter's eyes needed attention, she was glad for her to be seen by an ophthalmologist through the assistance of the Services for the Blind sight conservation pro-

gram. Mrs. Fain later asked to be evaluated by the same ophthalmologist. When surgery was recommended, her husband asked at the welfare office about possible assistance, and the case was reported to the area counselor for the blind.

In early childhood Mrs. Fain began losing vision in her right eye. By the time she was fourteen, all vision in the eye was lost except the ability to see hand movement. She was taken to a "country doctor" and he recommended that she quit school "before your eyes go out." She had finished the eighth grade.

Mrs. Fain adjusted early to the fact that she had only one eye that was useful, but when the counselor met her she was having serious visual problems with her other eye,

Mrs. Fain shows Mr. Marshall her embroidery.



the left one. It was now necessary for her to keep her teen-age daughter out of school to do the housework, as Mrs. Fain could not see well enough to manage the home. She was found to be legally blind and was then sent to a doctor for a complete medical checkup. His report showed several handicapping conditions, including obesity, dia-

betes mellitus, cataract of the left eye. She was also losing vision in the right eye.

With the cooperation of a number of people, the counselor began making the necessary arrangements to eliminate or reduce as much as possible this list of problems. He prepared a plan of services which included twelve office visits for preoperative check and control of diabetes, medicine, and transportation. He sent an authorization to the family drugstore for the required medicine for her diabetic condition. Mrs. Fain was placed on a strict diet under the direction of her family doctor and began losing weight at the rate of one pound per day. The doctor was very interested in this case, as was illustrated when he personally called my office by long distance to say that his patient was ready for eye surgery.

Before and after her surgery, Mrs. Fain never missed an appointment, even though all of her children had the mumps and her father died during this period. As a result of the surgery Mrs. Fain now has a visual acuity of 20/30 in the right eye, the one that had discerned only hand movement for the past twenty-eight years. Surgery was not performed on the left eye because of the possibility of double vision.

Mrs. Fain's diabetes has been brought under control, and by the time her case was closed she had lost 71 pounds and was still losing.

Mrs. Fain has made every effort to follow the recommendations of the physician and the counselor, and as a result, this has been a most remarkable case of physical restoration, and one of the most satisfying cases I ever had a part in.

Mrs. Fain is a happy homemaker. For the first time she can see her children with both eyes. Her teen-age daughter has been able to return to school. She and her family have expressed their appreciation to all concerned in every way that they know how. They even took the pharmacist a bushel of tomatoes and other things from the garden to thank him for filling the prescriptions. In a letter to the counselor she said, "I can't think of any words to tell you how thankful and happy we all are. I really can see after being blind for twenty-eight years!"

—HUESTON MARSHALL, *Counselor.*



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AUTHOR

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TITLE

(April 1967)

DATE

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